

(b) and (c) The responsibility for all the preparations for the National Games lies with the State Government. As per the information given by the State Government, construction work is at present slightly behind schedule owing to heavy rains during June-September, 2006. However, a mitigation plan has been prepared by them to overcome the delays and all the works are expected to be completed by September, 2007.

Setting up of Special Cell for the Commonwealth Games

2566. SHRI DARA SINGH: Will the Minister of YOUTH AFFAIRS AND SPORTS be pleased to state:

- (a) whether Government propose to take special steps for giving priority to sports activities in the country, keeping in view the 2010 Commonwealth Games;
- (b) whether the places providing lodging facilities to the visiting sports-person and participants have been identified;
- (c) whether Government propose to set up any Special Cell for the Commonwealth Games and appoint special skilled staff for the same; and
- (d) if so, the details thereof, and if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF YOUTH AFFAIRS AND SPORTS (SHRI MANI SHANKAR AIYAR): (a) The Government is giving the required priority and focussed attention to various matters pertaining to the Commonwealth Games-2010, including timely establishment of the required infrastructure and facilities, arrangements for the smooth conduct of the Games, and preparation of teams for the Games. For this purpose, close coordination and interaction is also being maintained with all the concerned stake-holders, including the Organising Committee for the Commonwealth Games-2010, the Government of NCT of Delhi, the Sports Authority of India (SAI), the Delhi Development Authority (DDA) and, in the context of the preparation of teams, with the Indian Olympic Association (IOA), the National Sports Federations (NSFs) and SAI. Besides, Government have under consideration a Panchayat Yuva Khel Abhiyan to stimulate sports activities country-wide, particularly in rural India.

(b) The participating athletes and officials for the Commonwealth Games-2010 would be accommodated in the Games Village, to be developed by the DDA, near NOIDA crossing off National Highway-24. With reference to creation of additional accommodation by way of hotels, paying guest accommodation, etc., for other visitors and tourists at the time of the Games, a Task Force has also been constituted in the Ministry of Tourism to follow up and coordinate with all concerned agencies.

(c) and (d) To enable for Government, to give focussed attention to the Commonwealth Games-2010 and other such events, a separate 'International Sports Division' has also been created in the Ministry. This Division is headed by a Joint Secretary, with the requisite supporting officers and staff. For the present, 12 posts have been sanctioned for this Division. The officers and staff will be drawn from the existing cadres, and will be given the necessary training/exposure as may be required. Accordingly, appointment of any other specially skilled staff is not envisaged for the present.

Lifting ban against some banned cricketers

2567. SHRI KALRAJ MISHRA: Will the Minister of YOUTH AFFAIRS AND SPORTS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government are aware of the fact that the BCCI is planning to lift ban against some banned cricketers of India;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) whether Government are also aware that BCCI has felicitated one of the banned cricketers who bring disrepute to India and Cricket; and

(d) if so, the reaction of Government?

THE MINISTER OF YOUTH AFFAIRS AND SPORTS (SHRI MANI SHANKAR AIYAR): (a) to (d) As per information received from the BCCI, they have not taken any decision to lift the ban against any banned cricketer. They had felicitated all former Captains of India and Shri. Mohd. Azharuddin, being a former captain, was also felicitated on the occasion. BCCI, like other National sporting federations, is autonomous in its functioning and Government respects that autonomy.